

## Oregon Outdoor Burning Guide

### A Source of Air Pollution

In parts of urban and rural Oregon, burning waste continues to be the disposal method of choice for a significant part of the population. Besides smoke that can be seen by an outdoor burn, the activity also emits a number of air pollutants that can adversely affect public health.

### Before You Burn

It may be illegal to burn certain types of waste in the area where you live, or you may need a permit to burn your waste.

### Don't Burn Prohibited Materials!

This guide outlines DEQ's burning regulations for debris from land clearing, agricultural, commercial, construction and demolition and domestic (residential household) activities. Since some Oregon cities and counties have local burning ordinances, there may be additional restrictions in your area.



Any type of outdoor burning is referred to as "open" burning.

### Outdoor Burning Guidelines

Outdoor or "open" burning includes any burning outdoors. A fire in a "burn barrel" is open burning. Other examples include burning piles of yard debris, burning stumps to clear land and burning construction debris or the remains of demolished structures.

### Materials That Can Not Be Burned

DEQ regulations prohibit open burning of the following materials at anytime, anywhere in Oregon:

- Rubber and plastic products
- Tires (includes burning tires to start an approved agricultural waste fire)
- Wet garbage
- Petroleum and petroleum-treated materials
- Asphalt or industrial waste
- Any material that creates dense smoke or noxious odors

**It's against the law to conduct any open burning that:**

- Unreasonably interferes with enjoyment of life or property,

- Creates a public or private nuisance,
- Is a hazard to public safety

### State Open Burning Regulations

DEQ regulations prohibit certain types of burning in selected areas of the state. In the Willamette Valley, any city with a population between 1,000 and 45,000 has a three mile special control area and cities with a population of 45,000 or more have a six mile special control area. Cities outside the Willamette Valley with a population greater than 4,000 have a control area that extends three miles from the city's limits.

Within these control areas the following materials are prohibited from being burned: waste from commercial establishments, forest slash, construction and demolition activity and land clearing. Household burning is prohibited and backyard burning is restricted in Willamette Valley communities with more than 1,000 people. **Also any material moved off the property of origin anywhere in the state cannot be burned without a permit.**

Contact [your local DEQ office](#) to confirm whether your area has any specific restrictions.

Each day, DEQ analyzes air quality and weather data to determine if ventilation is sufficient to allow open burning in the Willamette Valley and notifies the State Fire Marshall. The Fire Marshal forwards this information to all fire districts in the valley. This notice applies to the Willamette Valley only.

State regulations give DEQ the authority to prohibit open burning anywhere in the state on a day-to-day basis depending on air quality and weather conditions. The rules governing open burning are found in Oregon Administrative Rules, [Chapter 340, Division 264](#). **Open burning violations can result in penalties of up to \$10,000 per day of violation.** The State Fire Marshal can also make a separate determination to prohibit open burning.

**Caution:** Always check with [your local fire](#) department before you burn. DEQ does not issue fire permits. Don't risk a fine!

### Alternatives to Open Burning

- Compost or chip plant materials on-site
- Organize Community Cleanup Days
- Curb-side pick up
- Take materials to local recycling center or landfill
- Reclaim used lumber
- Utilize construction site recycling programs
- Use debris as fuel for a municipal steam generator



State of Oregon  
Department of  
Environmental  
Quality

### Air Quality Division

811 SW Sixth Avenue  
Portland, OR 97204  
Phone: (503) 229-5359  
(800) 452-4011  
Fax: (503) 229-5675

[www.oregon.gov/DEQ](http://www.oregon.gov/DEQ)

Please call your local fire department to report an open burning complaint.

You may also contact DEQ's complaint hotline at 888-997-7888 or submit a complaint online at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/complaints/>

You will need to provide a complete address if you would like DEQ to follow up on your complaint.

## Specific Regulations

### **Backyard Burning (Household and Yard Debris)**

Open burning associated with a residence ("backyard burning") is prohibited in and around the Portland metropolitan area, unless a hardship is demonstrated and DEQ has issued a "hardship permit". Contact [your local fire district](#) or the Portland office of DEQ to find out if you are in this prohibited area. In most of the Willamette Valley where backyard burning is not prohibited, open burning of yard debris is only allowed on a seasonal basis. The seasonal restrictions include whole fire districts near Portland and the Eugene-Springfield area of Lane County. Restrictions also apply in Oakridge, West Fir, and up to six miles beyond the city limits in the Corvallis and Salem-Keizer areas. In and around other Willamette Valley communities of 1,000 or more population, seasonal restrictions apply out to three miles beyond the city limits.

Seasonal burning in most of the Willamette Valley is limited to "burn days" authorized by DEQ during the spring (**March 1-June 15**) and fall (**October 1-December 15**) seasons. In central Lane County, the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) authorizes open burning from **October 1 through June 15**. Open burning is prohibited in the Ashland, Medford, and Grants Pass areas from November through February.

### **Slash Burning**

Slash burning (burning debris from logging) is limited to burning on forestlands for forest management and is usually managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry. It is **not** the clearing of forestland for any other purpose.

### **Agricultural Burning**

Open burning for agricultural purposes is usually allowed anywhere in the state, unless fire safety concerns restrict or prohibit burning on a given day.

Agricultural burning is limited to genuine agricultural waste. Agricultural waste is material generated by an agricultural operation that uses, or intends to use, land *primarily* for the purpose of obtaining a profit in money by raising, harvesting and selling crops or raising and selling animals (including poultry), or the products of animal husbandry. Prohibited materials can't be burned, even in an agricultural setting.

Agricultural burning must be an integral and necessary part of the agricultural activity. The agricultural activity might include clearing of land, but does not include the construction and use of dwellings. Burning associated with a dwelling is considered to be domestic burning, backyard burning, or burning of yard debris and is not part of the farming operation.

Agricultural open field burning, the burning of residue left from the harvest of a grass seed crop, is regulated in the Willamette Valley under a separate program operated by the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Questions about field burning should be directed to the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

DEQ approval is not required for agricultural permits. Contact your local fire department to inquire if an agricultural burn permit is otherwise needed

### **Contact Information**

Individual fire districts may issue fire permits and may prohibit open burning based on local fire safety or air quality concerns. **Always contact your local fire department to find out if burning is authorized on a particular day.**

For more information, contact

- [Local Fire Department](#)
- [Lane Regional Air Protection Agency](#)  
541-736-1056 or 877-285-7272  
LRAPA 24-hr line: 541-726-3976
- nearest DEQ office:

### **DEQ offices:**

Bend office	541-388-6146
Coos Bay office	541-269-2721 x222
Medford office	541-776-6089
Pendleton office	541-278-4626
Portland office	503-229-5600
Salem office	503-378-5085
Complaints Hotline	888-997-7888
Toll-Free	800-452-4011



*Prevent smoldering fires, minimize smoke.*

### **Accessibility information**

DEQ is committed to accommodating people with disabilities. Please notify DEQ of any special physical or language accommodations or if you need information in large print, Braille or another format.

To make arrangements, contact DEQ Communications & Outreach in Portland at 503-229-5696 or call toll-free in Oregon at 800-452-4011; fax to 503-229-6762; or email [deqinfo@deq.state.or.us](mailto:deqinfo@deq.state.or.us).

People with hearing impairments may call 711.

